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## Integrated Pest Management 101: Corn-damaging caterpillars

Marlin E. Rice

*Iowa State University*, [merice@iastate.edu](mailto:merice@iastate.edu)

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# Integrated Pest Management 101: Corn-damaging caterpillars

Marlin E. Rice, Professor, Entomology, Iowa State University

One of the foundational elements of an integrated pest management program is correct identification of potential pest species. This presentation will provide participants an opportunity to test their identification skills in the arena of insect identification. The six most common caterpillar species (Order Lepidoptera) that attack mid- to late-vegetative stage or reproductive stage corn plants will be presented in a multiple-choice format. Circle the correct letter for each caterpillar photograph shown in the PowerPoint presentation. The key identifying characteristics for larvae in the mid to late instars are listed below for each of the correct species.

1. a armyworm
- b black cutworm
- c corn earworm
- d stalk borer

*Key characteristics:*

- 1) Head orange with black eye stripe
- 2) purple “saddle bags” behind true legs on thorax
- 3) two cream-colored stripes along back

2. a corn earworm
- b European corn borer
- c sod webworm
- d western bean cutworm

*Key characteristics:*

- 1) head solid dark brown or black
- 2) no distinct stripes on body

3. a armyworm
- b fall armyworm
- c sod webworm
- d western bean cutworm

*Key characteristics:*

- 1) inverted white “Y” pattern on front of head
- 2) four black tubercles on top of last body segment, which when connected form a “square”

- 4. a armyworm
- b corn earworm
- c variegated cutworm
- d western bean cutworm

*Key characteristics:*

- 1) body covered with micro-spines (magnification needed)
- 2) long setae arising from bump-like tubercles
- 3) orange head (sometimes green) with net-like pattern

- 5. a armyworm
- b dingy cutworm
- c variegated cutworm
- d western bean cutworm

*Key characteristics:*

- 1) pronotum with two broad black stripes and two narrow black stripes
- 2) body lacking distinctive stripes and setae

- 6. a armyworm
- b dingy cutworm
- c variegated cutworm
- d striped corn cutworm

*Key characteristics:*

- 1) prolegs with lateral black stripes
- 2) front of head with two black crescents